

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
AUSTIN DIVISION

RICHARD MEYER,
Plaintiff

v.

MARK WAID,
Defendant

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Case No. 1:18-cv-00800-LY

**DECLARATION OF MARK WAID IN SUPPORT OF
DEFENDANT’S MOTION TO DISMISS FOR LACK OF PERSONAL JURISDICTION**

I, Mark Waid, upon oath, hereby declare:

1. My name is Mark Waid. I am over 18 years old, of sound mind, and I am capable of making this declaration. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein, and, if called to testify, I could and would do so competently under oath. The statements herein are within my personal knowledge and are true and correct.

My General Background

2. I am the Defendant in this case. I write comic books and have been in the comic book industry for more than 35 years. I have authored stories for DC Comics and Marvel, the two major comic book companies, including such superheroes as Captain America, Superman, Daredevil, and Wonder Woman.

3. I live in Santa Monica, California and I have lived in California for more than two years. I work from California as a freelance author of comic books. I do not maintain any agents for service of process in the State of Texas. I was personally served with the summons and Complaint for this lawsuit filed by Plaintiff Richard Meyer (“Plaintiff”), while I was at my

home in California.

4. I have no interest in, use of, or possession of real property within Texas. I do not own or lease any personal property in Texas. I do not have any bank accounts in Texas. I do not maintain any assets in Texas. I am not required to pay any income, business, or property taxes to Texas. I have not used the Texas court system as a litigant other than being named as a Defendant in this matter. I do not regularly do or solicit business in Texas, nor do I have any ongoing business relationships in Texas.

5. I lived in Texas in the early 1980s when I was young (I was born in 1962)—before I was a working professional in the comic industry—but I have not lived in Texas since then. I do not have a mailing address or telephone number in Texas. I have made infrequent visits to Texas (including for brief visits to attend book signings and conventions), but those visits had nothing to do with the allegations or people or entities identified in Plaintiff's lawsuit. I have not made any statements regarding Plaintiff while I was in Texas, or otherwise engaged in any conduct while in Texas involving Plaintiff.

6. I have never had office space in Texas, and I do not recall any colleagues with whom I would work regularly living in Texas. At the time of the alleged events in this case, including in 2017 and 2018, I had no connection to Texas. The comic-book industry is not centered in Texas; indeed, there is nothing unique regarding Texas in relation to the comic-book industry. The comic-book industry is spread across the world; if it is centered anywhere, it would be in California and/or New York.

My Knowledge Regarding Plaintiff

7. In 2017, I became aware of a YouTube channel called "Diversity & Comics"

(“D&C”), which I came to learn is operated by Plaintiff. I have seen some of the videos posted by Plaintiff on that channel, and it is clear that the channel is not specifically aimed at Texas—but rather is a platform whereby Plaintiff directs his complaints about diversity in the worldwide comic industry generally at audiences wherever they are located. Here is the link to the D&C channel, which indicates more than 90,000 subscribers.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrlzSqLSGj8GIOeT5jrQsJA>.

8. I also became aware that the Plaintiff operates an active Twitter profile. Attached as EXHIBIT 1 is a true and correct copy of what, based on my knowledge and experience in the comic industry, is (and what has been publicly represented to be) the Plaintiff’s Twitter profile. That profile states, “I run the DIVERSITY & COMICS YouTube channel,” and indicates almost 20,000 “followers.” The profile references New York, NY.

9. While I became generally aware of the Plaintiff’s existence and role with regard to D&C, I did not know that he apparently lives in Texas. Whenever I made statements (including any social media posts or tweets) regarding Plaintiff, I did not know he was in Texas or had any connection with Texas. I did not know where Plaintiff was located or where he lived. I did not give thought to where he lived or was located. I only learned Plaintiff apparently lives in Texas when I received a copy of this lawsuit.

10. I have made posts and tweets from my personal Facebook and Twitter pages/accounts. On Facebook, during 2017-2018, I had approximately 5,000 “friends/followers,” and nearly 100,000 “followers” on Twitter. Whenever I would post on Facebook or Twitter, those posts (or tweets) would show up in the “feed” of my followers/friends, wherever they may be located. I recall a total of two or three tweets and Facebook posts from me regarding Plaintiff.

When I made those tweets and posts regarding Plaintiff, I did not know where Plaintiff lived or was located or whether he had any connection with Texas (and I did not make or post them while I was in Texas), and they would have been accessible by all of my followers/friends (not just those in Texas). Any member of the public could also access my Facebook and Twitter pages and view my posts and tweets, even if not a “friend” or “follower.”

11. At some point in time I became aware Plaintiff sought to publish a book called JAWBREAKERS—LOST SOULS. That book, as I understand it, would not be about Texas (or at least it is not marketed as aimed at Texas), but rather a story involving a “mutant ape.” According to press reports, I understood that Plaintiff would work with Jon Malin, Ethan Van Sciver, and Brett Smith, on that book. Attached as EXHIBIT 2 is an article from “Bleeding Cool” that I downloaded which discusses the book. “Bleeding Cool” is a publication that focuses on the comic industry and is widely read within that community. *See Ex.2, No Enemy But Peace—Richard Meyer, Antarctic Press, and Jawbreakers*. From my work in and based on my knowledge of the industry, I was able to identify the Twitter profiles for Malin, Van Sciver, and Smith, which indicate none are in Texas. True and correct copies of the profiles are attached as EXHIBIT 3. Mr. Malin’s Twitter profile page indicates he is in Michigan; Mr. Van Sciver’s Twitter profile indicates he is in New Jersey; and Mr. Smith’s Twitter profile pages indicates he is in Arizona.

12. I support diversity in comic books; I believe that the roles of women, minorities, and non-straight people make our industry better. Therefore, I developed concerns about Plaintiff’s apparent views and activities un-relentlessly targeting such people. I believe that Plaintiff has led a campaign that has resulted in the harassment of many good people within this

industry, particularly women and the LGBTQ+ community. As I began to observe Plaintiff's YouTube channel and Twitter activity, I was frankly shocked at his views and insensitivity. For example, attached to this declaration as EXHIBIT 4, are true and correct copies of tweets from Plaintiff's Twitter account that I downloaded from Twitter, which exemplify why I became outspoken against him.

13. Plaintiff's offensive comments are not limited to Twitter. For example, I became aware that in a November 2017 YouTube rant, he falsely and disgustingly referred to some comic professionals, including myself, as pedophiles. *See* Ex. 2, Bleeding Cool (discussing Plaintiff's YouTube rant). And he suggested that certain women, some directly named in his rant, had gained roles exclusively because of sexual conduct. Plaintiff's own words and conduct aimed at the comic industry are what caused my concerns regarding Plaintiff—not any activity aimed at or involving the State of Texas.

My Discussion with Antarctic Press

14. In May 2018, I had one phone call of approximately 15 minutes with someone I understood to be an owner of Antarctic Press. I had left a message at Antarctic Press and asked that someone return my call. I did not know that Antarctic Press was located in or had operations in Texas; I obtained a phone number for them through industry contacts. I did not think about where it was located when I called. After my message, someone identifying himself as associated with Antarctic Press called me back, and we discussed Plaintiff. I did not know where the person was located when he called back—whether in Texas or somewhere else. (During this call, I also did not know where Plaintiff lived or was located, or that he had any connection to Texas.) I still had no knowledge that Antarctic Press had any operations in or connection to

Texas.

15. I did not know Antarctic Press or its owner or owners well, but I had run into one of its owners at industry functions before. The person who called me back identified himself as the brother of the owner whom I had previously met, and he said he had recently taken over Antarctic Press. From my limited interactions with the owner whom I had met, I had a favorable impression of Antarctic Press and respected its reputation. By this time there was already an independent and sizeable wave of social media backlash for Antarctic Press's possibly publishing Plaintiff's book given his existing reputation as someone of great intolerance. The only reason I wished to speak with Antarctic Press was to investigate what it knew about Plaintiff because I perceived that Antarctic Press may not have known much about him.

16. During the one call between myself and Antarctic Press, as confirmed by Antarctic Press itself, I did not threaten Antarctic Press regarding whether to enter into business with Plaintiff. During the call, in fact, the speaker indicated Antarctic Press had already decided to sever ties with Plaintiff because it had learned more about his conduct and reputation. Nothing I said served as the impetus for Antarctic Press' decision. During my call it became clear that Antarctic Press had recently already become aware of some of Plaintiff's hateful words and conduct and this had caused the publisher substantial concern. The person I spoke to mentioned that he was not on social media and therefore lacked specific knowledge of Plaintiff's conduct, but he said he had been "strongly educated" by his staff and other freelancers. He noted that, based on what he had learned before I ever spoke to him: "What I've learned of Meyer's behavior is indefensible."

17. I did not tell or even ask Antarctic Press to not publish JAWBREAKERS—LOST

SOULS. I believe (and believed) that Antarctic Press had the right to publish JAWBREAKERS, just as I (and others) have the right to debate and disagree with views like those espoused by Plaintiff.

18. In public tweets, Antarctic Press stated:

FACTS: Mark Waid put a call in to our office. Staff took a message and told Mr. Waid our publisher would be informed. Nobody at AP ... felt threatened in any way by Mr. Waid's call. We have not been bullied into a decision by any comics pro.

...Mark Waid did not bully anyone at our company. Though he did call and express concern....Mark shed more light on the situation, and other factors came into play that do not involve any staff or freelancers at any other company, that led us to our decision....

(Emphasis added). These tweets are attached as EXHIBIT 5, true and correct copies of which I downloaded from Twitter. Based on my knowledge of the industry and information I gleaned after my call with Antarctic Press, I learned these tweets (at exhibit 5 and exhibit 6) came from Antarctic Press's Twitter account. In other public tweets—true and correct copies of which I downloaded from Twitter and which are attached as EXHIBIT 6—Antarctic Press stated:

- “Ultimately, some of our staff and freelancers were uncomfortable sharing a platform with anyone who makes disparaging remarks about anyone in this community. We had to cut ties. We wish Richard all the best.”
- “...Some of our staff was uncomfortable once more light was shed on the creator. We had to make a choice we could live with. We have other creators who are right and left who have not made personal attacks. They are the creators we decide to work with.”

These public statements are consistent with my call with them. I did not threaten Antarctic Press and I never demanded (or asked) that it not publish Plaintiff's book. I also never told or asked

any of my followers/friends, or anyone else, to contact Antarctic Press—and therefore I certainly did not tell anyone to threaten or harass Antarctic Press.

19. I understand that Mr. Meyer got hold of a private social-media chat among representatives of comic-book stores from all over the world who, individually, had decided not to carry his book for sale. I did not tell or ask any of these stores not to carry Plaintiff's book. In publicly divulging screenshots showing the identities of these stores, Mr. Meyer declared to his followers (according to a tweet that I downloaded, a true and correct copy of which is EXHIBIT 2):

OK, get ready...here come screenshots of the retailers colluding to prevent customers from buying JAWBREAKERS—LOST SOULS in comic book shops...It's from a private Facebook group for retailers titled FINAL ORDER CUTOFF

See Ex. 7; see also other Tweets attached as Ex. 7, which are true and correct copies downloaded from Twitter. (Note that Ex. 7 redacts the identities of the stores.)

20. Plaintiff's campaign against diversity is not aimed at Texas. From my perspective, his target is the comics industry as a whole, and he appears to equally abhor the role of a woman or a minority whether in Texas, California, or somewhere else. Based on my knowledge of the industry, Plaintiff's reputation from that campaign had developed before I ever spoke publicly about him, as indicated by those deciding not to do business with him, and as seen in articles about him, such as the following, true and correct copies of which are attached hereto:

- EXHIBIT 2, Bleeding Cool;¹

¹ Available at: <https://www.bleedingcool.com/2018/05/13/no-enemy-but-peace-richard-meyer/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2018)

- EXHIBIT 8, *#Comicsgate: How an Anti-Diversity Harassment Campaign in Comics Got Ugly—and Profitable*, Daily Beast, April 2, 2018;²
- EXHIBIT 9, *The Comicsgate Movement Isn't Defending Free Speech*, Washington Post, Sept. 2018;³
- EXHIBIT 10, *Comicsgate Leader Is Suing a Marvel/DC Writer for Defamation*, The Daily Dot, Oct. 1, 2018;⁴
- EXHIBIT 11, *Antarctic Press Cancels Jawbreakers in Wake of Controversy, Retailer Boycott*, CBR, May 13, 2018.⁵

21. Plaintiff has publicly claimed that he has raised substantial amounts of money to publish JAWBREAKERS since Antarctic Press chose not to publish the book—claiming he had raised more than \$250,000 in a short period of time. For example, attached as EXHIBIT 12 is a true and correct copy of a tweet that I downloaded from Twitter, indicating to me that Antarctic Press's decision not to publish Mr. Meyer's book was actually a boon to him.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 1, 2018, at Santa Monica, California.


Mark Waid

² Available at:

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/comicsgate-how-an-anti-diversity-harassment-campaign-in-comics-got-uglyand-profitable> (last visited Oct. 31, 2018)

³ Available at:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/09/13/comicsgate-movement-isnt-defending-free-speech-its-suppressing-it/?utm_term=.63a28b2f7a9c (last visited Oct. 31, 2018)

⁴ Available at: <https://www.dailydot.com/parsec/comicsgate-lawsuit-mark-waid/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2018)

⁵ Available at: <https://www.cbr.com/antarctic-jawbreakers-canceled/> (last visited Nov. 1, 2018)

EXHIBIT 1



Follow

Diversity & Comics

@DiversityAndCmx

Followed by no one you follow

I run the DIVERSITY & COMICS YouTube channel.
[*coughs*]

📍 New York, NY

🔗 [youtube.com/c/DiversityCom...](https://youtube.com/c/DiversityComics)

📅 Joined July 2017

541 Following 19.7K Followers

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media

Likes

📌 Pinned Tweet



Diversity & Comics @Diversity... · 21h ✓



A black man 🎃 🦇 🍁 🦋
@kwanzer

Saw that many of my i
were changing their n





I am Zack Izyaboi, The Grim Meeper of Comics.

9/12/17, 9:05 AM

13 Retweets 136 Likes



KekseMafia/CookieMobster · 9/12/17



Replying to [@DiversityAndCmx](#)

now someone give beaker a cloak a scythe and a bunch of comics on legs runnin awy from him



EXHIBIT 2


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No Enemy But Peace – Richard Meyer, Antarctic Press, and Jawbreakers

Posted by Rich Johnston May 13, 2018 1710 Comments

758

26

We first covered one of **Richard Meyer's** Kickstarter projects back in 2012 on Bleeding Cool when he was a writer and artist struggling to work professionally in the comics industry. The project, called *No Enemy But Peace* seemed to go well enough, raising almost \$4000 from over a hundred people.

Meyer's latest crowdfunded comic project was on IndieGoGo. *Jawbreakers*, is a military superhero comic to be drawn by well-known comic book artist **Jon Malin**, with covers

by **Ethan Van Sciver** and colours by **Brett Smith**. It was his second attempt to crowdfund the comic, but this time he had star status and the purse to buy big names.

After the success of Meyer's YouTube channel Diversity & Comics, famed for criticising what one might term progressive storylines in comics, throwing constant and repeated gratuitously offensive insults at anyone involved with them and rallying others to do likewise, this crowdfund did a lot better. It helped that Jon Malin and Ethan Van Sciver, both ostracised from their respective publishers Marvel and DC for attacking other employees at the company, were able to bring their own fanbase along with them.

The project raised over ~~\$200,000~~ \$250,000 from more than ~~4000~~ 6500 people — though a brief glance at a couple of pages of the many donors show that quite a number of those seemed to be people pledging repeatedly for multiple copies. This may have been part of a number of funding rallies he made, first to compete with the completed *BLACK* fundraiser, and then to beat **Gail Simone's** *Leaving Megalopolis* Kickstarter. Nevertheless, however it was achieved, it has been nothing short of a remarkable success.

One of Meyer's themes has been criticising people he deems as not having the talent to work in comics on their own bat, being hired by Marvel and other major publishers because of "virtue signalling" and the like. One could argue that he has just achieved that very thing for himself.

After the campaign concluded, it was then announced that longstanding indie publisher Antarctic Press would be publishing the comic. Best known for their long-running series *Gold Digger*, *Ninja High School*, all sorts of Steampunk series and publishing the first three issues of *Strangers in Paradise*, they also publish a number of politically contentious comics of all stripes. And right now that means different titles that both parody and celebrate **Donald**

Trump. And it was in that spirit that Antarctic Press agreed to publish the comic when approached.

A number of comic book retailers took it upon themselves to state that they wouldn't be carrying the book. There was much concern regarding some of Meyer's statements and the actions of his followers. Recently, his posting (and subsequent deletion) of one video he dubbed the Dark Roast on YouTube seemed to concentrate much of this together in one place, attacking comic creators and critics alike.

It was a harsh listen and was intended to be. Roasts are usually done with the consent of those being roasted. This was not. Some of you may wish to skip over the next few paragraphs between the asterisks.

It included discussion over which kind of paedophiles **Mark Waid, Dan Slott, and Brian Michael Bendis** were. That **Devin Grayson** "literally sucked her way into the comic industry" and that Waid "left his wife so he can go frickin' hit on cosplay girls."

That **Matt Santori-Griffith** "is a fucking fag. He's just this like flouncing-like super dramatic. Everything is rape, everything is harassment, everything bigotry. I've actually found that's fairly common. One of the things is just like these people they don't have lives; they don't have families."

That **Heather Antos** "is a cum dumpster who got a job at Marvel because... **Jordan White** is a sad sack perv who jacked off to her... the story is that she went and saw him at a convention. It's like, I'd like to be an editor and he's like, oh, this is going to be a hard sell for HR. Like Jordan White's going to go to Marvel HR, 'I really need you to hire her. My spank bank is getting incredibly low.'" That female editors at Marvel, as seen in the Milkshake photo "are literally just work-girlfriends for these creepy middle-aged or approaching middle aged-white guys who can't get any girl to talk."



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That **B. Clay Moore** "is a fucking piece of shit. I'm pretty sure he lives off of his wife like she's the breadwinner. He's like in Kansas he never has any kind of real job. I think he intermittently

like coaches a girl like high school girls like... baseball.”

And that **Mags Visaggio** “is a fucking crazy person, a criminal, who is definitely, definitely going to kill himself and it’s just where when and how. By the way, Mags did not transition, Mags is a trans trender... it’s literally just a pervert. It’s a crossdresser; it’s someone with a **fetish**. But they came along just at the right time that were all the trans issues and they’re like, ‘Oh, we can we can weaponize this.’”

“Kind of floating around the periphery, literally slaps a wig. People seem sent me pictures of this Brian guy... the picture I saw had a full head of hair, I do not know why he’s going on freakin’ IndieGoGo... go give me money... GoFundMe, asking for a wig, the wig looks like shit. I’ve seen you frickin’ before you transitioned. You had a full head of curly hair and you’re married to some fat chick and then you turn into a fake girl. Really just Mags is not a fake girl, he’s just a full-time pervert now.”

This was all in just one video. He has posted much more in a similar vein about Mags Visaggio, as well as the likes of **Erica Henderson, Tamra Bonvillain, Gabby Rivera, Kelly Sue DeConnick**, and more.

Meyer also posted some private Facebook screencaps from a retailer group, in which retailers discussed whether they would order any copies of the comic — or any Antarctic book — or not. With most deciding not. He then posted the names of the retailers, their stores, and contact details. Stores suddenly experienced offensive social media messages, had personal social media accounts targeted, and saw a flood of one-star reviews hit their Facebook pages.

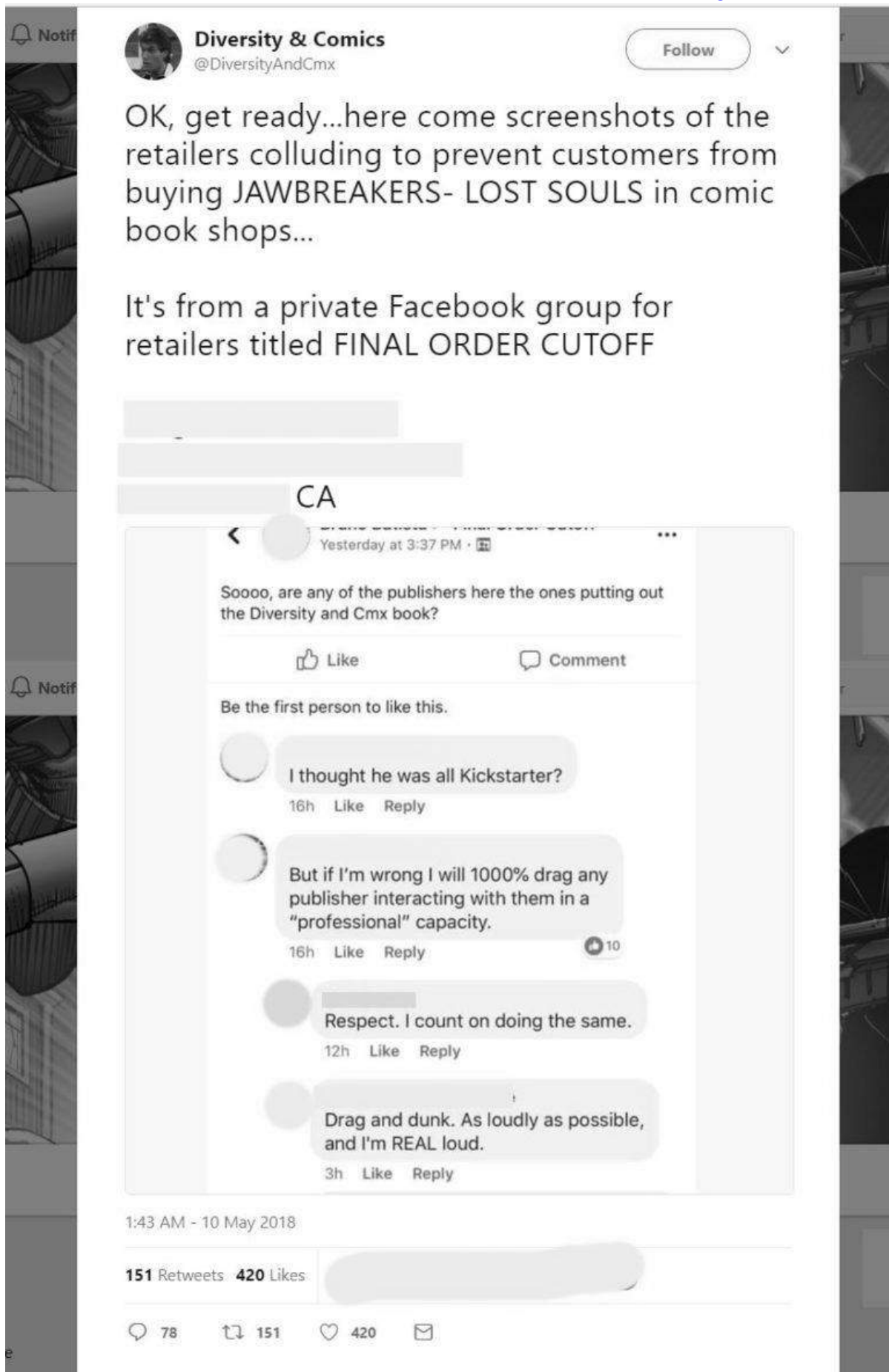
But this was not the first time Bleeding Cool had covered Meyer — and not just the 2012 Kickstarter. Last year Meyer was a principle figure in a now-removed video campaign calling on IDW and Hasbro to fire **Aubrey Sitterson**, a New York-based comics writer who had written a couple of harsh tweets criticising the commercialisation of 9/11 mourning, had also expressed socialist sympathies and was writing *G.I. Joe* comics for the publisher. At the time, Meyer said that “my hope was to get Sitterson fired.” The book in question was cancelled before the first issue’s orders were in, and Aubrey Sitterson has received no work from the publisher since. It was also his attacks on ex-Marvel editor Heather Antos that saw legions of people contacting her new place of work when she left Marvel with critical words.

So if there was a boycott, one could argue that people were only using Meyer’s tactics against him. There were accusations of collusion and threats of legal action — but that kind of thing usually concerns fixed pricing, not whether a comic book store chooses to stock a comic. Which is generally pretty much down to the store in question.

I spoke to Antarctic Press’s **Ben Dunn** to find out more about his decision to publish *Jawbreakers*, as his initial post on his Facebook page was starting to get a number of negative comments already. He told me initially that he was behind the creator 100%, but as to retailers’ concerns, said:

"Of course I am concerned about our relation with retailers. I like to think that over 30 years publishing comics, including comics like STRANGERS in PARADISE, GOLD DIGGER, NINJA HIGH SCHOOL, etc. that they know that we are creator's rights publisher. However, I respect their right to order as they see fit in servicing their customers in the best way possible."

There was a question as to whether Meyer would share that respect for retailer, tweeting at his many followers.



Ben told me:

"I am unaware of what the creator has stated to set off such a reaction. Yes. Of course I am concerned about the feelings and beliefs of others. However, I also believe that there should be no restriction in the free exchange of ideas. I do not believe I am forcing the creator's ideas unto anyone just as I am not forcing anyone to support it. My hope is that we are all mature enough to be able to see that there are other points of view."

But on reading some of Meyer's quotes about other comic creators, Ben seemed shocked. He thanked me for the discourse and told me he was going to have a serious think about the issue.

Comic creator Mark Waid, who once sought to make peace with Meyer, posted on Facebook:



Sometime after, Antarctic Press posted the following.



And Diversity & Comics posted:



Diversity & Comics @DiversityAndCmx · 10m

Good guys win! Bad guys LOSE!

Mark Waid and SJW Crybullies VICIOUSLY harassed @antarcticpress into dropping JAWBREAKERS- LOST SOULS...

So we started our own company SPLATTO COMICS!!!

Purchase our book and help fund the company!

indiegogo.com/projects/jawbr...



And regarding Mark Waid:



Diversity & Comics @DiversityAndCmx · 3m

This sounds VERY plausible. The vicious intimidation by Mark Waid yesterday was far beyond the realm of decency. Intimidation, threats, coercion against a publisher...a medical professional and good man brought to his ragged edge in just 2 days from the pressure.

DISGUSTING.

an absolute grain of salt. It was something I came across on 4chan so I fully acknowledge that it could be a load of bullshit.

That being said, I figured that I'd post it here anyway, seeing as how it was just too intriguing to ignore

I work at Marvel; some information for you guys

Waid was ordered to delete fucking everything social media-wise by Cebulski. Cebulski got some VERY angry emails from Antarctica Press. Lawsuit threatening letters in terms of Waid explicitly using Marvel's name when he threatened them to dropping "Jawbreakers". Along with threats of physical violence being committed against people at Antartica Press, if they did not do what Waid ordered.

Cebulski called Waid and basically demanded he kill all of his social media profiles and basically go off the grid. Basically, he's in an internet time out which he has zero choice but to honor, lest he get blackballed from ever working at Marvel again.

Plausible or not, it was bollocks. Asking around, there had been no such action from Marvel's side. And Antarctic Press went on the record as a result.



Antarctic Press | Comics And Chill

@AntarcticPress

Follow



FACTS: Mark Waid put a call in to our office. Staff took a message and told Mr. Waid our publisher would be informed. Nobody at AP contacted @CBCebulski or @Marvel nor felt threatened in any way by Mr. Waid's call. We have not been bullied into a decision by any comics pro.

10:58 PM · 12 May 2018

107 Retweets 275 Likes



301 107 275



As for the allegations of intimidation, threats, and coercion, I asked Waid what happened. He told me:

When I heard that fans and creators were coming down on the AP publisher for doing business with Meyer, I gave him a call. I'd met him before. He seemed like a good guy, and something didn't jibe; I was surprised that he'd want to get in bed with someone whose idea of marketing was to ask his fans to put together a list of stores that chose not to carry his book and to then circulate that list along with the full names, first and last, of the stores' employees and their phone numbers for ease of targeting and harassment. (No store "owes" it to customers to carry every comic. No store carries every comic. Stores pick and choose what they wish to sell based on what they think their customers will support and, to some degree, on their own personal feelings about the subject matter, the publisher's track record, and other factors—including, sometimes, whether or not they want to put money into the pocket of a

creator or creators who publicly refer to women in comics as “cumbuckets” or transgender creators as “men in wigs.”) Don’t be fooled, by the way—making that list wasn’t about selling comics or helping or healing the industry—for that, like Mark Millar does, you’d be supportive and circulate a list of stores that DO carry your books. This was flat-out about punishing and harassing and intimidating the stores who didn’t carry his book. “Nice store y’got here. Be a shame if there was allasudden a buncha one-star reviews on Yelp and Google...” C’mon. Why else would you make sure a list existed and was circulated that carried the personal information of not the owners but their employees? Would it be cool with you if, because I didn’t like the way your boss does business, I phoned you directly to complain rather than him? Of course not.

So. I called the publisher, who I knew to be a good guy, because I suspected there was more to this than “Yes, sign us up to make money for the transphobe,” and there was. He’s a busy man who has a full-time day job as well as a publishing house, and he’s not much for social media, so it never occurred to him to vet the creators. Why would it? That’s an honest mistake to make—as a publisher myself, if I see work I like and want to publish, it doesn’t automatically occur to me to just, by the way, make sure the creator is a decent human being (but apparently it ought to—lesson learned). I phoned him out of legitimate concern to warn him that there seemed to be a lot of anger directed at him by fans unhappy that he’d so openly embrace someone whose entire reputation was based on harassment and preaching intolerance and bigotry. Not “warn” him like “Hey, if you know what’s good for you, I’m just sayin’...” — warn him, as someone who has respect for him, that he may not realize who he’d gotten in bed with.

As it turns out, he was way ahead of me on this. It’s not my place to speak for him, but he was appalled that stores—the stores he makes his living selling to—were getting harassed. He’d learned an awful lot about his new

partner in the previous 24 hours. He and I had a good, productive conversation, listening to one another, disagreeing on some philosophical points but agreeing on others. Again, by his request, I'm not really at liberty to go into detail about the conversation other than to make clear that (a) he'd pretty much come to his conclusions about what to do long before he and I talked, and (b) he'll back me up when I report that at no time did I ask him not to publish the book or ask him not to affiliate with its creators. (I don't have any more right to bully someone into not publishing a comic than they have the right to bully my publishers.) My purpose in calling was to discuss, as we did, the potential fallout and how to navigate it. I offered to, once the dust settles, conduct an interview with him for publication where we can talk about the choices he's made here and the thinking behind them—they're pretty interesting, particularly when it comes to the difficulty in separating the artist from the art, and I think it'd be terrifically informative.

From my point of view, I think the publisher clearly had no idea what kind of a man he was helping to enrich, and I'm genuinely impressed that, now knowing what he knows, he's taken a stand even though he's in a no-win situation where he can piss off either his longtime customers and creators or a small but loud lynch mob that embraces doxxing and harassment as a marketing strategy

In the light of the cancellation, Richard posted:

**Diversity & Comics**

@DiversityAndCmx

Follow

Please don't send any negative messages or energy toward @AntarcticPress

They did what they had to do after enduring a vicious wave of bullying from SJW Comic Book Pros that was led by Mark Waid.

**JAWBREAKERS- LOST SOULS graphic novel**

A team of ex-superheroes attempt to save a monster from a vicious warlord who wants to exploit it!

indiegogo.com

6:08 AM - 12 May 2018

116 Retweets 468 Likes



But it didn't seem to work. As to the targeted stores, I asked **John Hendrick** of Big Bang Comics in Dublin, whose store first tweeted out that they wouldn't be carrying the comic, while letting any customers discover other stores that might.

**Big Bang Comics**

@TheBigBang_

We are choosing not to stock the upcoming @AntarcticPress comic JAWBREAKERS

Please check comicshoplocator.com/Home/1/1/57/575 for an alternate local retailer.

2:45 PM - May 10, 2018

There's A Lot to See and Do at Your Local Comi...

comicshoplocator.com

348 313 people are talking about this

He reported that yes, there had been negative social media response and one-starring of the store on Facebook, as well as people who had never been to Dublin saying they would not go to the store. But there had been a lot more positive response in the shop itself, with sales on Thursday and Friday up 40% and 35% respectively. It appears that tweet really moved the needle.

But he made the point that, aside from the creator posting gratuitous insults against friends and creators he supported and sold in store, there are a number of other reasons the store wouldn't have stocked the book.

One of these reasons was that having so many IndieGoGo purchasers meant that demand in store for the comic would be low — as those who wanted the book would already have bought it. And that's not true just for this book but for other crowdfunded titles too.

Two, they have never had success selling Antarctic books, from *Gold Digger* to *Steam Wars* to... the one with the Pirate Girl, was what he could remember.

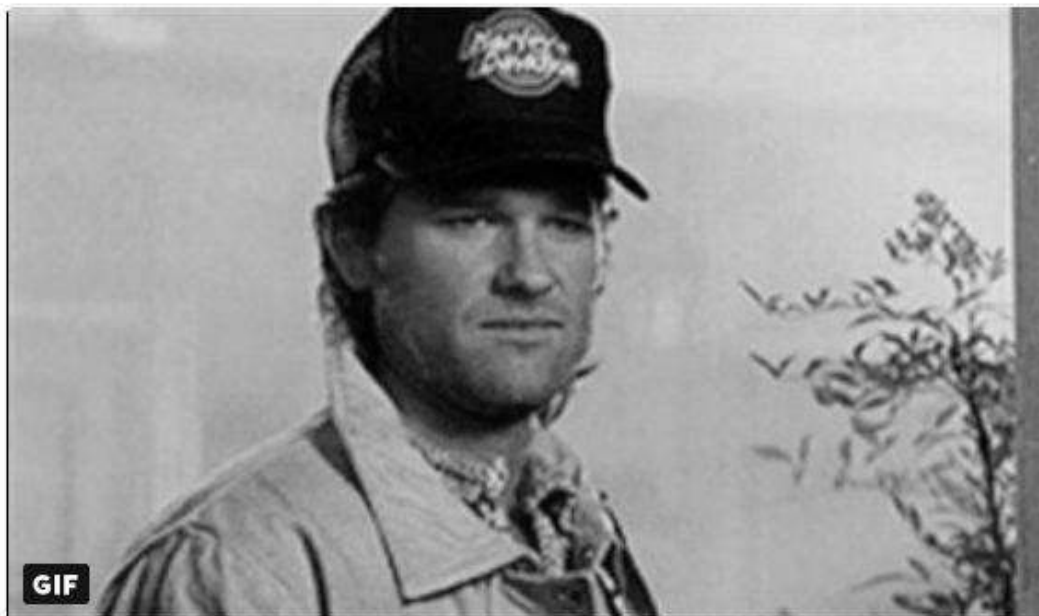
And three there was the danger of ghosting, people ordering the comic in advance, in order to increase its sales but not actually buying it. Again, not an entirely uncommon tactic.

So what now? Well, Meyer and friends stated that the comic will still be published as planned under the name as Splatto Comics, and colourist of the book, Brett R. Smith, posted that it would be distributed through Simon & Schuster.

Diversity & Comics Retweeted

**Brett R. Smith** @BrettRSmith76 · 11h

EVERYONE RELAX!!! JAWBREAKERS will be published. We will launch our own Imprint through a book publisher who I have lined up and our distribution will be through Simon & Schuster. It will be available on Amazon, Barnes&Noble, Direct and your LCS. @DiversityAndCmx @JonMalin



62

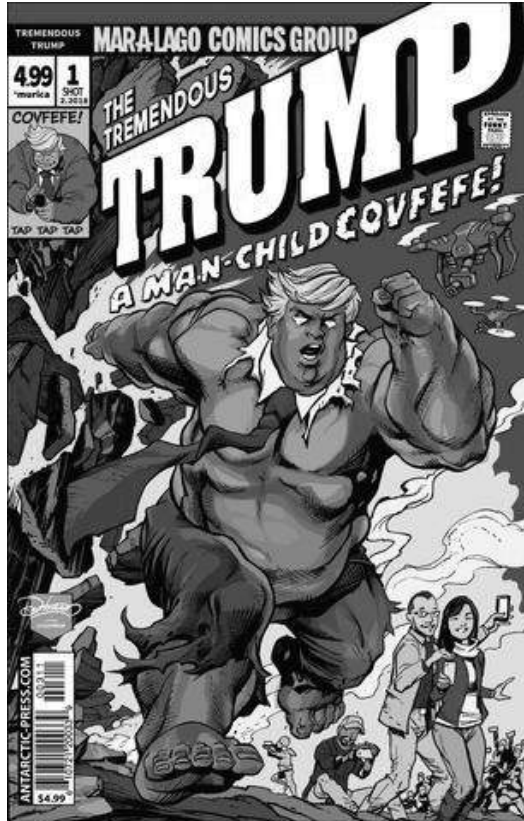
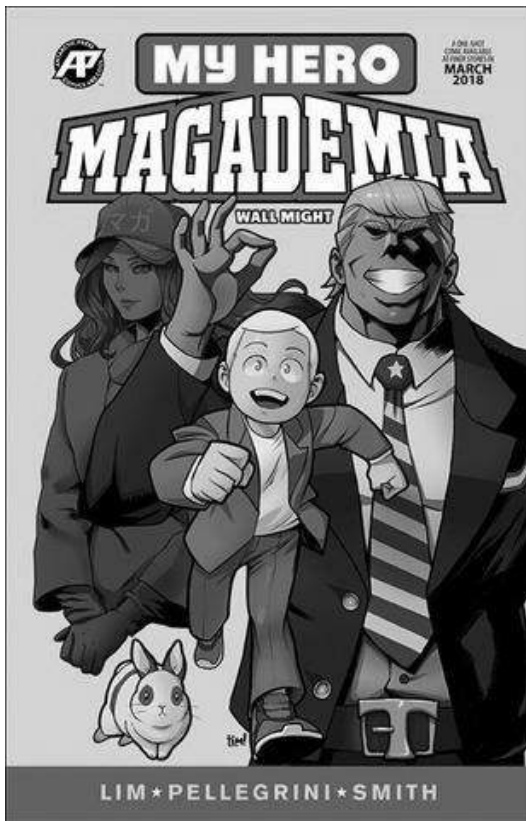
122

539



This is the publisher/distributor who you may also recall planned to publish, then pulled out of, **Milo Yiannopoulos's** book after much protest. Milo also then published the book independently.

And this is not Antarctic Press turning its back on "conservative" comics, as some have suggested. They will most likely to continue to publish pro and anti-Trump comics like the below, as before.



Although, as we were going to press...



Ben Dunn

Admin · 8 hrs

After a long weekend of discussion there will be a major announcement concerning the future of ANTARCTIC PRESS which will be revealed soon.



Like



Comment



Share

What could this be?

Declaration of interest: Richard Meyer has often targeted me with his YouTube videos, and many tweets detailing how much he despises me, including at least one tweet wishing my death that Twitter seemed to make him delete.

(Last Updated May 14, 2018 12:03 pm)

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About Rich Johnston

Chief writer and founder of Bleeding Cool. Father of two. Comic book clairvoyant. Political cartoonist.



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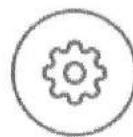
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EXHIBIT 3




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@EthanVanSciver

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CYBERFROG Artist, Star Wars Critic, illustrator for Jordan Peterson, ComicArtistPro Secrets on YouTube. Republican, COMICSGATE, Wonderful Human Sunbeam. #MAGA

 New Jersey

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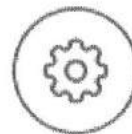
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ComicArtistPro Secrets  · 10/2/18

Order your CYBERFROG MINIATURE COLLECTIBLE HERE!



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@JonMalin

Followed by no one you follow

Comic Book Artist(Current JAWBREAKERS),
Frisbee golfer and YouTuber. [youtube.com/c/](https://youtube.com/c/MORTALENEMY)
MORTALENEMY Patreon. [patreon.com/](https://patreon.com/MortalEnemy)
MortalEnemy

📍 Michigan Badlands 📅 Joined March 2009

130 Following **7,175** Followers

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media

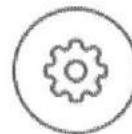
Likes

📌 Pinned Tweet



MALIN @JonMalin · 8/29/18

What is it to be a part of Comicsgate?
Replace "Iowa" with "comicsgate",
"Baseball" with "comic books", "\$20 per
person" with "\$25" and "evicted" with
"blacklisted" youtu.be/z6U1p0hehtg



Follow

Brett R. Smith ✕

@BrettRSmith76

Followed by no one you follow

Creative Director, Editor, Commercial Artist,
Entrepreneur, NYT's #1 Bestseller & Host of Full
Spectrum Culture: bit.ly/2MLFmA2

📍 Tucson, AZ 🔗 brs76.com

📅 Joined October 2016

1,069 Following 4,068 Followers

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media

Likes

📌 Pinned Tweet



Brett R. Smith ✕ @BrettR... · 7/23/18 ✓

First official video for Full Spectrum Culture is up! Check it out and let me know what you think? Also I have a much better lapel mic being delivered today for use on future videos :) @douglasarnet

EXHIBIT 4



Diversity & Comics

@DiversityAndCmx

Blocked

Can anyone name me a female comic book writer in American comics who is:

- actually a woman
- not SJW
- doesn't insult or attack customers
- at least moderate in talent

2:32 PM - 23 Jan 2018

48 Retweets 316 Likes





Diversity & Comics @DiversityAndC... · 1m ✓
Retard



darrylayo
@darrylayo ✓

Certain goals will call for certain kinds of art. That's no problem because there are different kinds of artists to do those different kinds of art! Everybody wins!

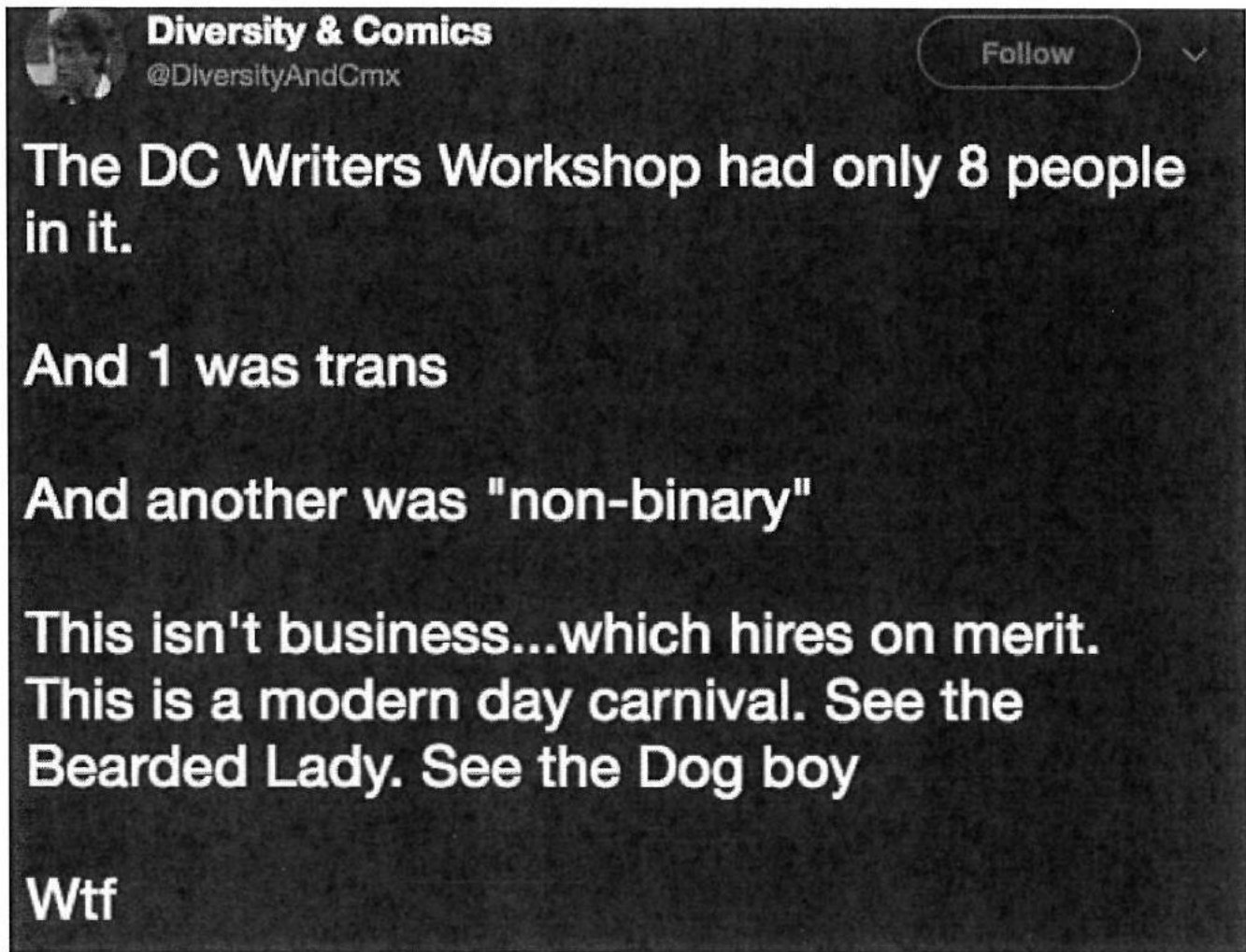


2



4







Diversity & Comics

@DiversityAndCmx

Following

This is literally a picture of the end of Marvel. A spineless leader who would rather tweet about food than take charge. A woman with no comic book experience hired for her plumbing. A minstrel show diva. And two men who have talent, but put politics over entertainment.



Diversity & Comics

@DiversityAndCmx

Following

She was hired for an editor position even though she has the resume of a summer intern because BEWBS

Derek Künsken @DerekKunsken

Replying to @Jashanpaulplays @SpaghetiKills8 and 5 others

She was hired because she can keep writers and artists and colorists organized. That's the editor's job.

4:38 PM - 28 Aug 2017



Diversity & Comics
@DiversityAndCmx

Follow



They hired a race hustler because of their
white guilt. people bought the book for the art
and character. Not Coates.
[twitter.com/AshcanPress/st ...](https://twitter.com/AshcanPress/st...)

This Tweet is unavailable.

10:39 AM - 28 Jul 2017

EXHIBIT 5

**Antarctic Press | Comics And Chill**

@AntarcticPress

Follow

FACTS: Mark Waid put a call in to our office. Staff took a message and told Mr. Waid our publisher would be informed. Nobody at AP contacted @CBCebulski or @Marvel nor felt threatened in any way by Mr. Waid's call. We have not been bullied into a decision by any comics pro.

4:58 PM - 12 May 2018

171 Retweets 523 Likes



369 171 523



Tweet your reply

**Ian Miles Cheong** @stillgray · May 12

Replying to @AntarcticPress @CBCebulski @Marvel

Why do you guys lie about everything?

8 13 109

**Futurist Dog [Extreme Centrist]** @FuturistDog · May 12

It's like a video release where the prisoners say they aren't mistreated by North Korea.

8



Antarctic Press This is a untrue story. Please do not spread it. Nobody at AP contacted Marvel. Mark Waid did not bully anyone at our company. Though he did call and express concern. No letters were written between us and Marvel. Mark shed more light on the situation, and other factors came into play that do not involve any staff or freelancers at any other company, that led us to our decision. We wish the Jawbreakers team success in their next phase. It's now bigger than we could have handled. They have lined up another publisher who can get them into a bigger venue than we could have.

Like · Reply · 1d



EXHIBIT 6



Antarctic Press Ultimately, some of our staff and freelancers were uncomfortable sharing a platform with anyone who makes disparaging remarks about anyone in this community. We had to cut ties. We wish Richard all the best.

Like · Reply · 1d



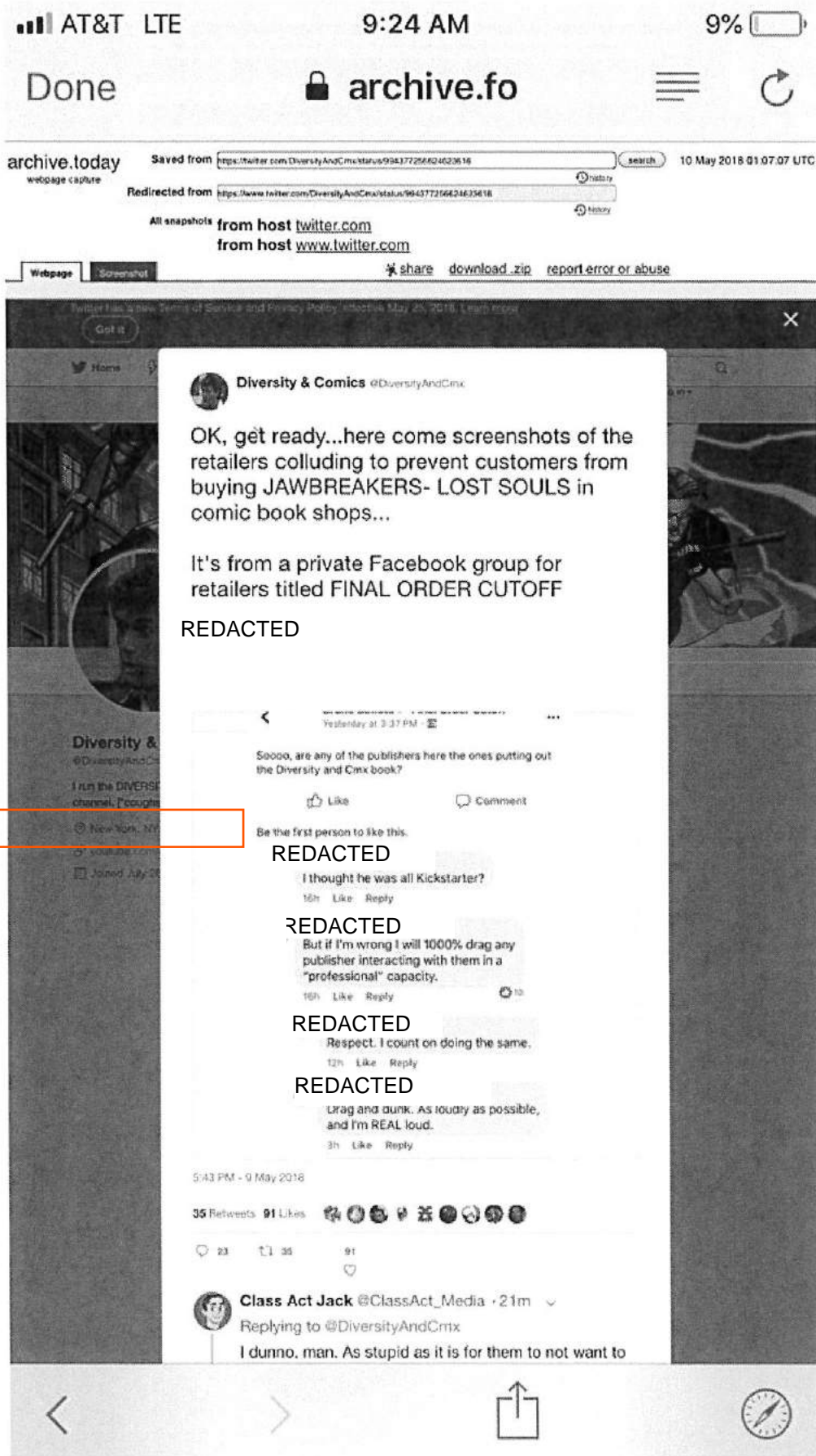


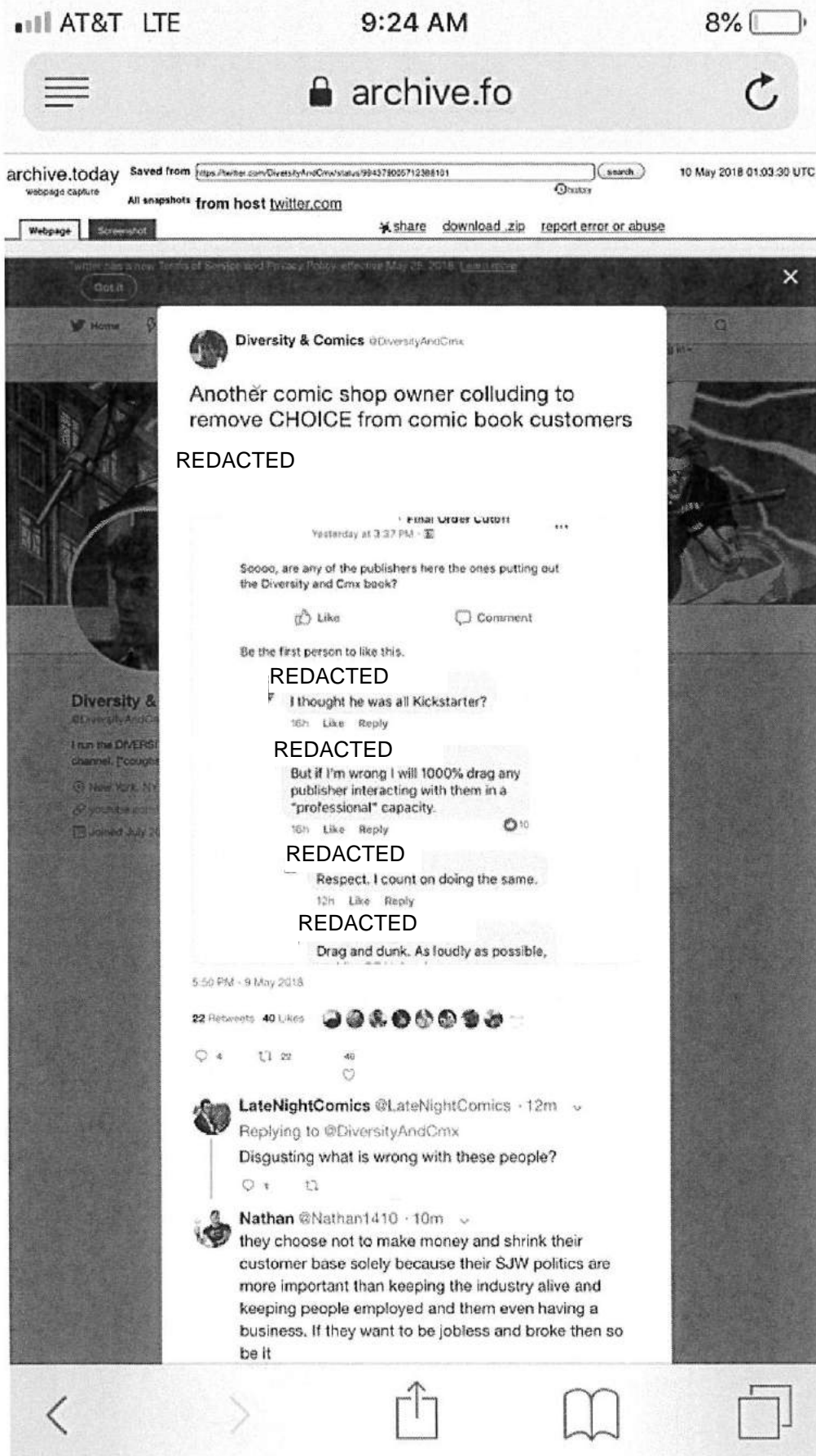
Antarctic Press Earl- we do not care either way what any other company does. We are so far removed from their radar that we know our decisions are of no concern for them either. Some of our staff was uncomfortable once more light was shed on the creator. We had to make a choice we could live with. We have other creators who are right and left who have not made personal attacks. They are the creators we decide to work with.

Like · Reply · 1d



EXHIBIT 7





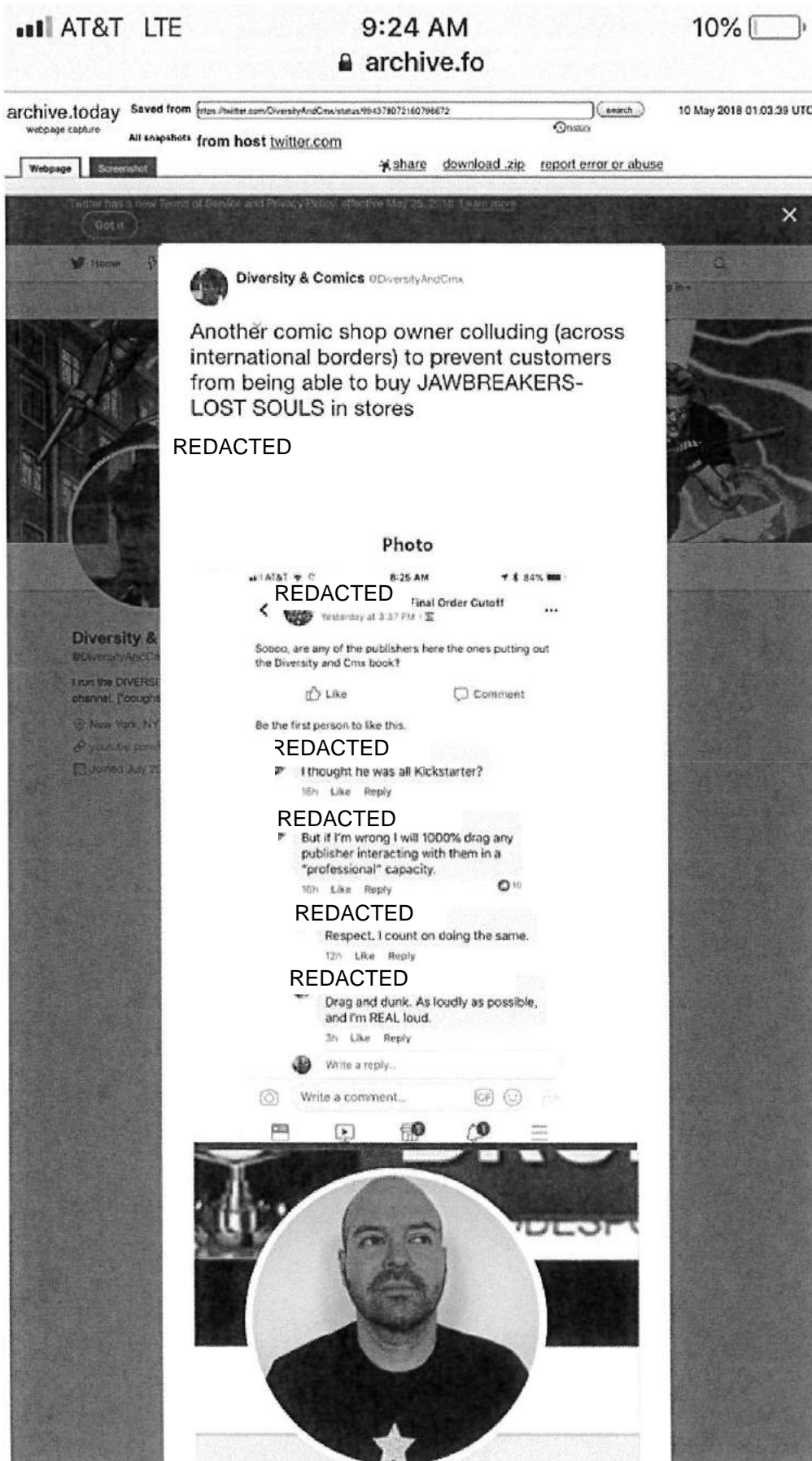


EXHIBIT 8

[◀ HOMEPAGE](#)

ENTER DEMO

JOIN

LOG IN

CHEAT SHEETPOLITICSENTERTAINMENTWORLD NEWSHALF FULLARTS AND CULTUREU.S. NEWSTECHHUNT FOR THE CURESCIENCESCOUTEDTRAVEL

TROLLS AT THE GATE

#Comicsgate: How an Anti-Diversity Harassment Campaign in Comics Got Ugly—and Profitable

An ugly new front in the online culture wars targets women, people of color, and LGBT folk in the comic book industry. And some have figured out how to cash in.

Asher Elbein
04.02.18 4:45 AM ET



poppyell



Getty

In some ways, it began with the milkshakes.

In July of 2017, five days after the death of groundbreaking comics publisher Flo Steinberg, a group of Marvel Comics’ female staff went out for milkshakes to celebrate her legacy. One of them, Heather Antos—at the time an assistant editor at the company working on *The Unbelievable Gwenpool*—snapped a selfie of the group holding their sweets and posted it on Twitter.

What followed was akin to a feeding frenzy. According to a vocal contingent online, Antos and the Marvel Milkshake Crew were “fake geek girls,” “social justice warriors,” and “tumblr-virtue signalers,” the sort of people

who were ruining the comics industry by their very presence. “The creepiest collection of stereotypical SJWs [“social justice warriors”] anyone could possibly imagine,” one user tweeted. Musings on Antos’ sexual availability led another to write, “Better have her sign a consent form, she looks like the ‘false rape charge’ type.”

While staff and creators from across the comics industry rallied with a Twitter campaign to support Antos, the abuse continued. Much of it was driven by the goading of a single Twitter account: @DiversityAndCmx, run by Richard C. Meyer. The resulting swirl of recrimination from comics professionals caused a spike in Meyer’s followers, thus setting a pattern many would come to regret. It was the first many in the industry had heard of him, or of the amorphous harassment campaign that came to be known as “Comicsgate.”

Geek culture has been rocked over the past four years by repeated outbreaks of reactionary hatred toward women and people of color, and Comicsgate is the latest front in that ongoing battle. Much has been written about it in the online press, and mainstream publications like The Telegraph and BuzzFeed have covered it. But to understand this latest eruption in the internet culture wars—or why the comics internet is currently ripping itself apart—you have to understand its context and the things that fuel it: the brands of cultural panic it feeds on, and the fact that it’s pretty good at making people money.

□
Comicsgate likely wouldn’t exist without Gamergate, the ur-harassment internet campaign, which in 2014 famously used a ginned-up sex scandal and the premise of “ethics in video games journalism” as an entry point for a sustained attack on women and “SJWs” that were held to be ruining the multimillion-dollar video game industry. Most of the women targeted were smaller critics or creators; much of the harassment was gendered. Opportunistic figures saw a chance to build their brands by covering and egging on the harassment. In the end, Gamergate never actually went away: It ascended, spread out, and lit a series of brush fires in pop culture spaces that are still smoldering. Few have been as successful, but all have drawn from the playbook that Gamergate perfected.

At this point, the rules of that playbook are widely and intuitively understood. Targeted harassment is hard to prove, because few are stupid enough to explicitly call for it in a public forum. Plausible deniability is the name of the game; so is playing the victim.

RELATED IN ENTERTAINMENT



Chelsea Cain Returns: ‘Yeah, I’m Dead to Marvel. Trust Me.’



‘Twilight’ Director Looks Back on Being Labeled ‘Difficult’

Stan Lee at the offices of Marvel Comics in Manhattan Beach, California.



Stan Lee Breaks His Silence: Those I Trusted Betrayed Me

If targets respond to their baiting, trolls will often turn around and present screenshots of the encounters as examples of people who can't take a joke, are hysterical, or are in fact harassing them. Sock-puppets—fake accounts created to inflate follower counts or set up fake attacks on their operators—are common. Everything drowns in a murk of confusion; those attacked, often struggling to describe their experiences, sound paranoid to people on the outside, precisely how troll campaigns like it. Everybody knows the score, but nobody can prove it.

As with Gamergate, says Andrew Farago, curator of the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco, much of the discussion around comics takes place in the tangled online ecosystems of social media, message boards, and blogs,

where trolls increasingly ran rampant. Some of these spaces flared up during Gamergate, but never quite evolved into their own movement. But with Trump's election and the resulting surge in alt-right and conservative boldness, Farago says, things changed. "More and more, my impression is that [Comicsgate] is made up of people who were into the Gamergate thing," Farago said, "and when that ran out of steam they noticed that they hadn't made comics miserable for enough people yet."

One of the faces of that change is Richard C. Meyer, the owner of a YouTube channel (ironically) titled Diversity & Comics. Meyer has spent much of his past outside the comics industry: He served in the U.S Army from 2000 to 2012 in Iraq and Afghanistan, and subsequently worked in IT, including at PayPal. His published work tends to have a military focus: In 2009 he published a black and white comic from overseas: *No Enemy, But Peace*, inspired by a fellow soldier in Iraq. In 2013 he wrote a comic commemorating the Korean War. He maintained a childhood interest in superheroes as well.

While working in the Bay Area, Meyer told The Daily Beast, he began noticing posters of Captain Marvel in the windows of comics retailers. He was annoyed by what he considered the "masculinization" of the character, and by the way he felt Marvel was pushing what he considered an unsuccessful book. "I started noticing a lot more weird stuff," he said. "Feminization of men, masculinization of women, basically, all the classic heterosexual pairings being destroyed... you realize this is a trend, and you start wondering why they're doing it." Why is Luke Cage, the quintessential blaxploitation tough guy, why is he pushing a baby carriage and he's the wimpiest, most soft-spoken—this is not done on accident."

In April of 2017, David Gabriel, Marvel's senior vice president of sales and marketing, told an interviewer at a retailer summit that part of the reason for the company's sales slump was "people were turning their nose up against" female or non-core Marvel characters. Gabriel rapidly walked the quote back, and subsequent reporting by industry outlet CBR showed that minority-led books weren't doing significantly worse than those starring white male characters. But reactionary elements in fandom reacted with glee.

That month, Meyer jumped into the fray with his YouTube channel. His videos—rambling, unscripted, often 20 to 30 minutes long—are a hodgepodge of comics reviews, analysis, and gossip regarding endless online battles. He hammered his theme home in every entry: that the failures of the comics industry were the direct result of hiring diverse talent, and that they needed to be driven out. (These videos have drawn admiring comments from Latino, liberal, and trans viewers, Meyer said, and provided screenshots of them.)



Screenshot/YouTube

"One of the things about SJWs is that they get a job because of surface qualities, being a woman, being black, being gay, being trans, and there's no adjustment on the ground to negative fan reaction due to low sales," he told The Daily Beast. The milkshake crew particularly raised his ire: "They obviously seemed to not be qualified. They can't spot basic typos, they can't notice major plot holes, they antagonize the fans... I talk to all these people, actual,

legitimate talents, who can't get a job to save their lives. Meanwhile some airhead who calls the fans Nazis and turns out laughably bad work is getting Eisner awards."

Both Meyer's YouTube and Twitter accounts rapidly became a repository for a constant stream of personal attacks and dog-whistles for his followers. He has publically labeled Ta-Nehisi Coates a "race hustler" and repeatedly mocked DC writer Magdalene Visaggio as a "man in a wig," claiming that she is violent and mentally ill. He fixates on the the physical appearance of female creators he dislikes and retweeted memes mocking certain creators as "autistic retards," along with images of himself slapping them.

In a private YouTube video called "The Dark Roast," originally posted in November 2017 and obtained by The Daily Beast, Meyer called one Marvel editor a "cum-dumpster," accused various female writers of "sucking their way into the industry," and mused which famous creators were pedophiles or had psychological problems. "The Dark Roast is where I get to say stuff like 'Dan Slott looks like a pedophile,'" he says in the recording. "I don't have to dance around, I don't have to say 'parody' or wink-wink."

"That was a private, letting-off-steam video," Meyer told The Daily Beast, confirming the video's authenticity. "Which had a disclaimer on it that it was for close friends only. I'm very disappointed whoever shared that with you broke that disclaimer and broke faith."

Meyer's videos rapidly began attracting a following, some of which came from inside the industry itself. He often speaks of having "insiders" who funnel him information and rumors about "SJW creators." Among his public fans are Ethan Van Sciver, a conservative artist who currently pencils *Hal Jordan and the Green Lantern Corps* for DC Comics. Van Sciver began promoting Meyer's channel on his Twitter account in June 2017, a month before the milkshake incident, and continued to do so while much of the industry was condemning the @diversityandcmx Twitter and YouTube accounts. Van Sciver has also defended Meyer in videos on his own YouTube channel. "He's very practical, and he's thinking about the things that need to get done to fix the situation that he's talking about," Van Sciver said in a video posted in January. "I think some people find him to be a little bit of, you know, a pitbull... he's just not gonna let it go. People that think he's gonna go away, I've seen no evidence [of it.]"

Van Sciver is no stranger to controversy himself. Somewhat infamously, he put together a 2007 sketchbook with Green Lantern villain Sinestro on the cover and called it *My Struggle*—a riff on Mein Kampf—brushing off warnings from friends that it was in poor taste. (His tendency to share memes sourced from subreddit /r/The_Donald is covered over at BuzzFeed.) He also acquired a public reputation for bullying behavior: In May of last year, he told another Facebook user objecting to his use of suicide jokes to "kill himself" before apologizing and vowing not to vent on social media. In February of this year, in a since-deleted tweet, Van Sciver remarked of comics critic Kieran Shiach's request for a bit of breakfast money, "That bitch can starve."

At the same time, he's vocally denounced online toxicity. Asked by The Daily Beast whether he felt he'd contributed to such toxicity in the cases cited above, Van Sciver responded, "Of course not. When I was offering recommendations to those individuals you mention, it was solely in my capacity as a priest."

DC Comics, meanwhile, pointed to their new social media policy, and otherwise, declined comment.

□

By August of 2017, multiple creators told The Daily Beast, it seemed like Van Sciver and Meyer had formed something of a double act, with Meyer taking the more outwardly aggressive role. In the aftermath of the milkshake incident, waves of attacks by Meyer’s followers erupted with some regularity. That summer, creators discovered that just about anything could set off a cascade of abuse: a political tweet, the announcement of an upcoming project, or—as with Antos—a selfie. But most coincided with either Meyer or Van Sciver bringing a creator to the attention of their followers, either by making a video about them or engaging with them online.

Creators who responded or complained—even without naming their harassers—found their tweets screencapped and disseminated into an endlessly regurgitating cycle of YouTube videos and articles on sites affiliated with Comicsgate, like [Bounding Into Comics](#), which in turn drove more attention and abuse toward victims. The resulting feedback loops can rage for weeks at a time.

Take the case of Darryl Ayo. Ayo is a cartoonist and critic who works largely in the small-press comics scene—not a superhero guy, in other words, he told The Daily Beast, and certainly not a mover and shaker in the industry. When Marvel freelancer John Malin tweeted that “[Nazis are SJWs](#)” on Jan. 21, to widespread public confusion and scorn, Ayo [condemned](#) the post in a tweet and went on with his day.

At [12:36 a.m.](#) that night, Van Sciver tweeted at Ayo and told him to come [on his livestream to debate with Malin](#). (Van Sciver wrote to BuzzFeed that he hoped to “humanize” himself to Ayo, according to a response he leaked to [Bounding Into Comics](#).)

Ayo was surprised; up to that point, he said, he’d had no reason to think Van Sciver knew who he was. Suspecting a trap, Ayo declined. From there, events took on a familiar character. Van Sciver continued to engage Ayo. Accounts following Van Sciver piled in, calling Ayo a “mediocre negro” and a “[homeless crackhead](#),” while Van Sciver claimed that Ayo had been the one [harassing him](#) by calling him a Nazi, which he told BuzzFeed had made [him and his family afraid to travel](#). (The tweets in question were from months before and referenced the infamous *My Struggle* sketchbook, Ayo said.)

From Ayo’s perspective, the whole thing had come out of nowhere. “I don’t particularly seek these people out. But I’m not raised in a way—and I’m not in a social position—where someone is going to publically lie to me, about me, and I don’t immediately point out every part of where they’re lying,” he told The Daily Beast. “For a few weeks, people would make accounts just to throw them at me. At least a week into it, maybe more, it became clear that [Meyer] had become involved and was driving a lot of the traffic. That was when I realized things weren’t going to die down.”

When asked about the behavior of his followers in instances like these, Van Sciver replied to The Daily Beast via email, “I think my fans are the best!!!! I always appreciate their support for me and for my art.”

Trans creators, including Visaggio and Tamra Bonvillain, a colorist on DC’s *Doom Patrol*, are also recurring targets. “[Meyer’s] the least subtle about his hatred of trans people, and that goes for many of his followers engaging in harassment. They misgender us and call us mentally ill in no uncertain terms,” Bonvillain told The Daily Beast. Worse, she says, they keep circling back, egged on by Meyer. “I tried to change my Twitter to private for a short while during one occurrence, but they just got screen-grabs from other people and bragged about it... At its worst, it would be all day, for several days at a time. I manually blocked several hundred people before I ran a blockchain.”

The physical addresses of people subjected to Meyer’s attention have also been doxxed in conjunction with specific death threats. (Meyer himself has a record in Travis County, Texas, of harassment, stalking, and assault, though he pled down to disorderly conduct. He told The Daily Beast that the charges, filed in 1999, were over a fight he had with another man over a girl.) Meyer says he tells fans in his videos not to contact people, and has characterized himself as primarily interested in analyses of the comics industry. “I don’t like it when people get into personal behaviors that aren’t germane to the books,” he told The Daily Beast.

“I remember making a lot of comments... sometimes I will point out physical qualities, but I can’t think of any examples,” Meyer said when asked about personal attacks in his videos, including moments where he mimics and mocks trans people’s voices. “A lot of the stuff is tongue in cheek, a lot of the stuff is in-jokes or references... but the issue with trans [people] is that I believe there’s people who have basically weaponized their status and they’ve been put to this gatekeeper position because they’re unassailable because of their trans status.”

More organized campaigns occasionally rise out of this amorphous stew of trolling. In September 2017, Meyer targeted Aubrey Sitterson, an openly leftist writer on IDW’s licensed G.I. JOE comics. Sitterson had previously drawn ire from fans for his cartoon-influenced approach to the franchise. The announcement that the character of Salvo—previously depicted as a white man with a big gun—would be reimagined as a Samoan woman added fuel to the anger of vocal right-wing fans.

But what really got Sitterson in trouble was a tweet on Sept. 11 that took aim at what he perceived as performative grief.

Meyer had his opening; he and other right-wing fans went on the offensive, complaining to IDW and Hasbro that Sitterson was disrespecting an American tragedy and demanding that he be taken off the book. Relatively well-known figures like journalist Kurt Eichenwald got involved as well, tweeting at Sitterson that he was a “scummy excuse 4 a human.”

The blowup came at an awkward time for IDW, which had recently relaunched G.I. Joe as a new series, *Scarlett’s Strike Force*, also written by Sitterson. Initially, the company stood by him. On Sept. 13, however, they released a

statement distancing themselves from Sitterson, whom they left unnamed. The publisher essentially buried the book and canceled it, citing low sales. (Sitterson declined to comment to The Daily Beast, citing a desire to put the whole thing behind him. IDW did not respond to requests for comment.)

“My hope was to get Sitterson fired and for IDW to stop peddling SJW politics,” Meyer told PJ Media. “I’m happy with how he was removed.”

These days, Meyer avoids the term “Comicsgate,” which he told The Daily Beast he was never really affiliated with. He also said that he’s trying to move away from hurtful rhetoric, and is instead promoting #MovetheNeedle, an ostensibly positive campaign aimed to get his fans to buy books he gives good reviews to on his site. People need to buy books from “non-SJW” creators, he said, if the industry is to survive.

“I used to joke about every time I would go into a store I would see the wall of diversity, and it was all these books that nobody wanted, but the stores still felt compelled to order,” he said. “The deal is that the things that stuck, you used to get more of. Now the things that fail, you get more of. Captain Marvel gets canceled because of low sales, they’ll bring her back with two smaller cup sizes and thicker jaw.”

This is a common view amid a certain section of the internet. It’s true that retailers have been on somewhat shaky footing in some cases, operating on tight margins that leave them straining under an endless flood of event comics, retailer-incentive variant covers, and comics that are continually relaunched with new No. 1 issues to goose sales. (Such complaints were a common feature of Gabriel’s retailer conferences in April 2017.) Sales on superhero books that were previously dependable workhorses—the *X-men* franchise, for example—have shrunk, and blockbuster hits are rarer.

But there are structural reasons for this, and it has to do with comics’ growing audience and the wider diversity of companies and types of stories on offer. The days when everybody was reading a few different series from Marvel and DC are long done; now new comics readers have their pick of a flood of books from both the Big Two, in addition to a variety of other companies offering a variety of other sorts of comics.

What looks like a shrinking readership for superheroes is partially an illusion created by the breakup of a monoculture. As comics creator Scott McCloud commented on Twitter, “Saying ‘comics are bad now’ when all you’ve ever read is superheroes is like saying ‘movies are bad now’ while standing in a demolished Blockbuster Video.”

“When you point out the real issues of why the comics industry is changing as a demographic, there’s nothing these Comicsgaters can do about it,” said Richard Pace, a writer and artist with a long freelance career at both Marvel and DC, and a former friend of Ethan Van Sciver. “[Meyer] talks about his ‘insiders,’ but he’s clearly full of shit. He has no understanding of the industry at all... His notion is ‘We can just drive these SJWs out of comics, and then comics will be what we liked again.’ No, they won’t! Comics will just be as crappy as they often were before. But now they have a cause they can wrap themselves around.”

□

There's also a certain amount of publicity—and money—to be gained from tilting at SJWs and firing up a reactionary base. Before his tumble last year, alt-right provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos built a lucrative brand of paid speeches and television appearances out of his championing of Gamergate at Breitbart. A subsequent flare-up in the science-fiction and fantasy publishing world, masterminded by the alt-right personality Vox Day, helped Vox launch a comics crowdfunding project: Alt-Hero, scripted by professional comics writer Chuck Dixon and illustrated by a bevy of artists. The project made \$235,900 out of a \$25,000 goal, partly from an explicit invitation to “trigger” SJWs.

Meyer internalized a lot of Vox Day's rhetoric early on in his YouTube career: He told The Daily Beast that he was a fan of Vox Day's “rules for SJWs”—SJWs always lie, SJWs always double down, SJWs always project—though he says he eventually got a bad feeling about him and distanced himself, roasting him as a “carpetbagger” and a “fraud.”

While Meyer's crowdfunding efforts don't rival Vox Day's successes, he does fairly well on Patreon, currently drawing in anywhere from \$1,100 to \$1,082 a month, with 299 patrons. His number of YouTube subscribers has also risen precipitously, from about 29,000 in the aftermath of July 2017 to 62,878 now. The Patreon income goes to a Spanish artist for his upcoming book *Iron Sight*, about a border war in Texas, and he's launching another Kickstarter next month. “Before getting into this, I used to do one book every two years or so,” he said. “Now I've got more stuff ramped up.”

Meyer's whole business model, like Milo and Vox Day before him, is predicated on outrage, Farago said. Like many independent comics people, Meyer uses crowdfunding to get his creative projects off the ground. Courting controversy and picking fights with convenient targets—say, with a shadowy cabal of assistant editors, comics critics, and early-career creators—raises his profile, which leads to more followers, which leads to more money for his projects.

“The comics industry is small enough to where it's not that difficult to get yourself known,” Farago said. “I think Meyer saw a niche and realized he could fill it.”

Asked whether this was the case, Meyer replied via email, “I'm making videos to spotlight problems in the industry so it can stop its tailspin.”

Van Sciver's case is a little bit more complicated. Rumors reported in Bleeding Cool suggest that Van Sciver may not be getting more work with DC after his current run on *Hal Jordan and the Green Lantern Corps*; the company provided BuzzFeed with a statement reiterating that “comments that may be considered insulting, cruel, rude, crass and mean spirited” were against company guidelines. (DC declined further comment to The Daily Beast.) Van Sciver's 5-month-old YouTube channel, which he characterized to BuzzFeed as “successful and growing,” has about 17,214 subscribers; his Patreon, where he has 117 followers, doesn't make his crowdfunding income public.

There's been persistent, unconfirmed talk that Van Sciver and other conservative comics professionals are planning to crowdfund their own comics label, Pace says. While he hasn't heard it from anyone he considers a reliable source, the idea makes a certain amount of sense. If DC ever did publically fire him, or anyone, that would give Van Sciver the ability to make a big splash and launch an imprint.

"If I were someone who's put myself into the kind of hot water that Ethan has, Kickstarter or really, really pushing Patreon would be the smartest move you can make," Pace says. "Tribalism is great marketing."

□

Beyond its role in helping Meyer occasionally produce a comic book, the broader question of Comicsgate's impact on the industry itself is more difficult to parse. It's certainly true that IDW set a bad precedent by distancing itself from Sitterson, an event that went largely unaddressed outside of the comics press and Twittersphere. What followed suggested that corporate attempts to appease a harassment campaign at a freelancer's expense usually have the opposite effect: It only gives them further ammunition and encouragement, and makes them hungrier for new targets.

In December 2017, an alt-right mob using the same techniques went after MSNBC correspondent Sam Seder, misrepresenting a tweet in a (temporarily) successful attempt to get him fired. It seems that the comics industry has largely caught on to this trick, however; Meyer's subsequent attempts to get people fired have largely come to nothing, and so he has taken to proclaiming victory when people like Heather Antos leave the industry for jobs elsewhere.

Meyer's main achievement seems to be making life miserable for the trans creators and other marginalized figures who bear the brunt of the harrassment. "During the worst times, it was some of the nastiest sexist and/or transphobic remarks you could think of, harassment sent to my editors and publishers in an attempt to get me fired or blacklisted, trying to dig up personal info about me," said Sophie Campbell, artist of *Glory* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

"Even when I was away from the computer, in the back of my mind I knew it was still going on and spreading to other people," she added. "The people in my immediate circle tend to talk about it more since I'm acquainted with other trans people in comics, but outside of that I don't see it come up that much. It seemed like hardly anyone cared when it was happening to me."

"I think the [Comicsgate] group is much bigger than I expected, which is disheartening," Ayo said. "But I think there's limits to it... everyone on the inside of comics companies is aware of this, and nobody wants this. If they had a specific agenda to promote, this is the worst way to promote it."

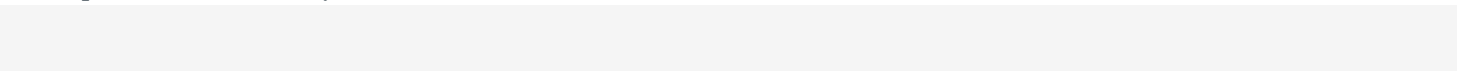
Ironically, all of this is happening as comics culture is flowering. While Marvel’s sales have been shaky, DC has been on the upswing, garnering fan excitement and mainstream attention with curated comics labels, including two aimed at children and young adults. But superheroes are only one part of a much larger industry. Raina Telgemeier’s YA graphic novels are perennials on bestseller lists; the small press and webcomics scene is a hotbed of experimentation and diverse, bold storytelling voices, in genres from romance to action adventure, much of it without a cape in sight.

Comics creators (including Meyer himself) are figuring out new forms of marketing and crowdfunding to produce books that the direct market wouldn’t be able to support. The digital revolution has made comics accessible to a wider audience than ever. Then there’s the ongoing juggernaut of Marvel Studios, whose *Black Panther* is now the highest-grossing superhero film in U.S. history. Appealing to wider audiences and diverse demographics sells, and that’s not going to change anytime soon.

“It’s them seeing types of people they don’t like being successful, seeing superhero comics catering to other demographics and types of readers that aren’t them, and they’re throwing a tantrum,” Campbell said. “We just need to stick together and keep doing comics.”

Correction: An earlier version of this article omitted the year in which charges of harassment, stalking, and assault were filed against Meyer and mistakenly referred to the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco as the Cartoon Arts Museum.

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EXHIBIT 9

The Washington Post
PostEverything Perspective

The Comicsgate movement isn't defending free speech. It's suppressing it.

As with Gamergate, the voices they seek to silence are often those of women and minorities.

By Noah Berlatsky

In 2016, the comics writer Chelsea Cain found herself drowning in abusive tweets. She'd made the mistake of penning an issue of Marvel's Mockingbird series that featured an image of its heroine wearing a shirt saying, "Ask Me About My Feminist Agenda." In the words in which one representative attack put it, she was "ruining my favorite character with your feminist crap." As many others have in similar circumstances, Cain temporarily deleted her account.

Cain's experience was one of the most important precursors of Comicsgate, the latest in reactionary movements and harassment campaigns centered on nerd fandoms. Like Gamergate in games and the Sad Puppies in literary science-fiction, Comicsgate claims to be fighting against censorship and the politicized groupthink of leftist social justice warriors (SJWs) — anti-racists, feminists and marginalized people whom the right characterizes as oppressors. But again, like those other movements, Comicsgate participants in fact work to silence opinions they dislike and voices they deem malignant. The left is often accused of intolerance and antipathy to the First Amendment. The most serious new threat to free speech, however, is the use of free speech as a cover for an ongoing online assault on the enemies of the right.

The hashtag Comicsgate started in June 2017. A group of female Marvel employees posted a group selfie in which they were celebrating the legacy of recently deceased comics publisher Flo Steinberg, one of Marvel's earliest employees who had helped the company's unique approach to fan outrage. Ironically, a group of comics fans online were enraged at the evidence that women worked for Marvel. They condemned the women as "fake geek girls" and "the creepiest collection of stereotypical SJWs anyone could possibly imagine," in the words of one enraged tweeter. Another suggested that a woman in the picture looked like "the 'false rape charge' type."

Among those joining in the attacks was Richard C. Meyer, who uses the ironic twitter and YouTube handle Diversity & Comics. Meyer became a ringleader of Comicsgate, which rallied around the argument that female, POC and LGBT characters and creators were ruining comic books, and pushing out the views and voices of authentic fans. DC writer Magdalene Visaggio, a trans woman, was a special target; Meyer misgendered her and claimed she was mentally ill. In a private video posted in 2017 and obtained by the Daily Beast, Meyer railed against one female Marvel editor using gendered slurs and attacked others for supposedly exchanging sexual favors for career advancement. More recently, Comicsgate proponents have been arguing that celebrated poet and playwright Eve Ewing, who will be writing the new Ironheart series at Marvel, is unqualified or undeserving.

Comicsgaters and their sympathizers generally frame these attacks on industry professionals as a brave, contrarian fight against stifling conformity. An important forerunner of Comicsgate was a controversy over art by Frank Cho and Milo Manara, which showed comics characters in hyper-sexualized poses. He and Manara responded to criticism by drawing other controversial sketches, at least one featuring an underage character, in the name of free speech and baiting feminists. Cho later claimed he was censored when writer Greg Rucka asked editorial to remove him as Wonder Woman cover artist because of his sexualized drawings.

The idea that people are being censored because they face criticism or because in work-for-hire settings their bosses or collaborators aren't happy with their work doesn't make a lot of sense. But it's a staple claim of right-wing nerd harassment, and it's used to justify extreme claims about left-wing totalitarianism. The X-Men artist Jon Malin compared progressives to Hitler. "X-Men are closer to Jews in SJW Hitler's Germany fighting for freedom because they see ideologues rising, silencing them, weaponizing hate, racism, and socialism," he wrote Jan. 21.

Similarly, when Malin and Richard Meyer's comic Jawbreakers was dropped by its distributor, Antarctic Press, the far-right conservative outlet the Federalist went all in on the censorship narrative. Many creators and fans urged Antarctic Press to drop Jawbreakers because of Meyer's history of harassment and abuse. The Federalist, however, said Meyer was being silenced because of his brave conservative stances. "The industry stood firm against conservative creators because they are outspoken against the extreme politics in comics, and as the left is wont to do, mischaracterized them in an effort to delegitimize their product." Attacking women for daring to post selfies while celebrating a deceased colleague is apparently important conservative political speech.

Reactionaries claim that the left is preventing them from saying all the sexual, important, insightful things they want to say. But right-wing nerd harassment campaigns themselves are aimed at policing and shutting down certain speech and certain speakers.

Darryl Ayo, an indie comic creator and critic, told me about one instance in which Comicsgate targeted him for speaking out. Ayo had criticized Malin's claim that SJWs were Nazis. That night after midnight, popular comics penciler, outspoken right-winger and Comicsgate leader Ethan Van Sciver challenged him to appear on his podcast to debate Malin. "Darryl, come on my show right now and say what you have to say," Van Sciver tweeted.

Ayo didn't know Van Sciver and refused the offer. Van Sciver continued to demand that he appear on the show. For anyone who uses Twitter, the result was, predictably, months of insults and harassment. The day before we spoke, eight months after the original confrontation, someone had posted multiple messages on Ayo's Facebook page to denigrate his art, referencing his conflict with Van Sciver.

Van Sciver framed himself as a proponent of debate and the healthy exchange of ideas. But in fact, he was demanding that Ayo deferentially follow his orders in the middle of the night or be labeled as unreasonable and a justifiable target for abuse. A free speech frame became a way to go after someone for saying things Van Sciver didn't like — and for putting others on notice that their tweets or comments could make them the next target.

Van Sciver wasn't able to orchestrate enough abuse to force Ayo offline. But other reactionary nerd campaigns have had greater success in terrorizing their targets. Gamergate, motivated like Comicsgate by anger at the existence of women in nerd spaces, sent so many death threats to feminist games critic Anita Sarkeesian that she was forced to flee her home.

This sort of harassment was not an isolated incident. Milo Yiannopoulos, a Gamergate leader who wrote for the reactionary website Breitbart, orchestrated a campaign of harassment against actor Leslie Jones for appearing in the all-female "Ghostbusters" reboot. The abuse led Jones to leave Twitter — which was such an embarrassment that Twitter banned Yiannopoulos from the platform. Even without him, though, a campaign of abuse in the same mode was launched against Kelly Marie Tran of the Star Wars franchise. Again, reactionary fans were angry that the movies had cast an actor who wasn't white and male. Tran deleted her Instagram after she was sent waves of racist and sexist abuse.

Most of Comicsgate's targets have been lower profile than Jones or Tran. But that doesn't mean that the harassers have been ineffective. Meyer, Van Sciver and their followers have made it clear that black critics who question their friends, or female Marvel employees who post selfies online, will be bullied and attacked. Their goal has been to make comics less welcoming to people who aren't white and male, and they've succeeded in that goal.

The right wing in our era has wrapped itself in the mantle of the First Amendment; even fascists claim to march in the name of free speech. But Comicsgate, and other geek culture reactionary campaigns, show that this is a lie. When you set yourself against diversity, you also set yourself against diverse voices. The effort to keep certain people out of comics, or games, or geek culture, is also an effort to silence certain perspectives, and to prevent certain people from speaking. Free speech for certain people isn't free speech at all.

"I think they've successfully made the stakes of being a female or black or queer or trans comics creator feel a lot higher," said Jay Edidin, a comics writer, editor and critic. Comicsgate put marginalized creators and fans on notice that some people in comics didn't want them there and would come after them. It's impossible to know how many people that discouraged, but there's little doubt that the intent was to discourage. "I obviously can't look at numbers and say, 'Well, this many people would have been here making comics if it weren't for Comicsgate,'" Edidin said. "But I absolutely believe it has had an effect."

Part of the reason the effect may be hard to measure is that there are also people working, despite Comicsgate's best efforts, to make comics more welcoming. Earlier this year, Edidin himself helped lead a successful campaign to get Dark Horse Comics to cover trans health care under its insurance policy. Many comics pros have also recently begun to speak out against Comicsgate, which may help to reduce the movement's influence. Comics may yet become more open to different viewpoints, different experiences and different creators. If it does, though, it will be despite right-wing "free speech" warriors, not because of them.

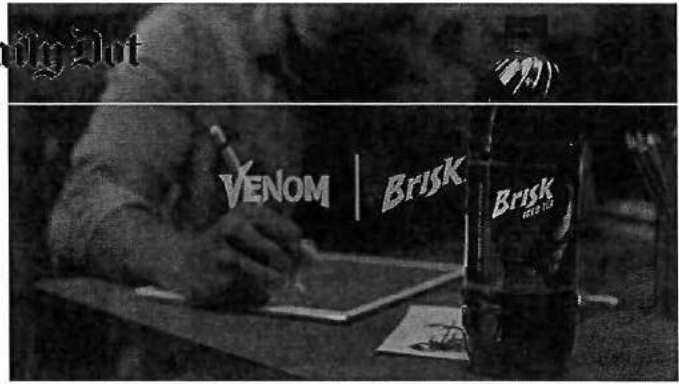
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Noah Berlatsky is the author most recently of "Chattering Class War: Punching Pundits from Brooks to Breitbart and Chait to Chano." Follow 

EXHIBIT 10

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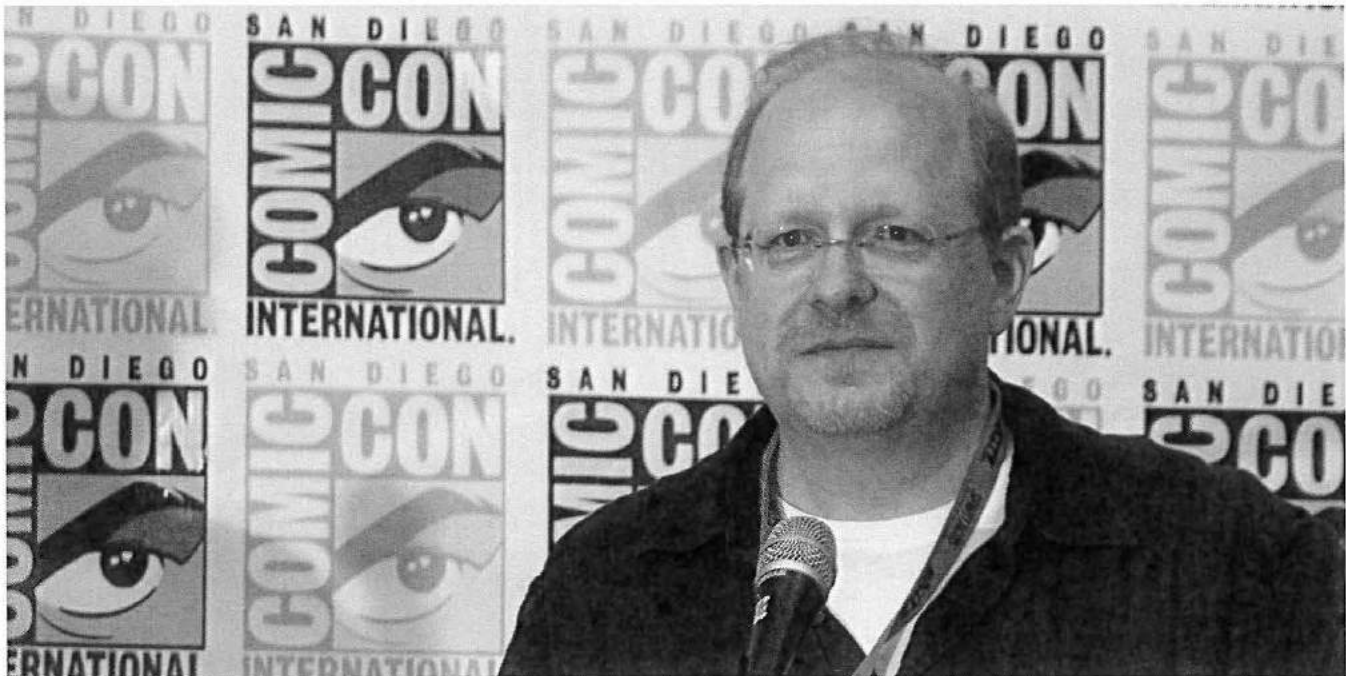
The Daily Dot



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Comicsgate leader is suing a Marvel/DC writer for defamation

Gavia Baker-Whitelaw—Oct 1 at 4:59:42 AM



Loren Javier/Flickr (CC-BY-ND)

This lawsuit is a pretty wild ride.

CLOSE

[Comicsgate figurehead](#)

Richard C. Meyer is taking DC/Marvel writer Mark Waid to court, suing him for “tortious interference with contract and defamation.” Meyer accuses Waid of ruining his career in comics; a bold move considering the reputation Meyer already created for himself.

Gaining notoriety as a conservative reactionary YouTuber, Meyer is best known for provoking harassment campaigns against women, people of color, and trans people in the comics industry. He’s the comics publishing equivalent of Milo Yiannopoulos, and his behavior is widely documented on social media and in mainstream outlets like the *Guardian* and *Washington Post*. As for defamation, Meyer is well-versed in the topic himself, having accused several well-known comics creators of pedophilia (without evidence), and he described a female Marvel editor as a “cum dumpster.”

The lawsuit relates to *Jawbreakers*, a comic written by Meyer and drawn by Jon Malin and Brett R. Smith. *Jawbreakers* is an action comic about a team of former superheroes, marketed as an “apolitical” response to a perceived progressive bias at Marvel and DC. It was initially meant to be published by Antarctic Press (a small indie publisher), but they dropped it following backlash from the comics community. Several retailers promised to boycott the comic if it came out, while prominent writers and artists criticized Antarctic Press for giving Comicsgate a platform.



CLOSE



Jawbreakers/Indiegogo

By this point, in May 2018, Meyer and Comicsgate were already infamous for stirring up trouble. Waid was one of the most high-profile people to speak out against *Jawbreakers*, posting on Facebook to say he'd personally informed Antarctic Press of Meyer's behavior:

"I have a call in to Antarctic Press. Until I hear back, I'm (hesitantly) willing to give them the benefit of the doubt that they don't really understand who or what they're getting into business with, which – though it would seem a stretch – is a possibility. If I do hear back, I'll report in. Curious as to how they feel about publishing creators whose marketing strategy is to allegedly (*koff*) encourage their fans to threaten the employees of stores, and/or harass and one-star-review-bob stores, that don't order their product."

Soon after, Antarctic dropped *Jawbreakers*. Meyer decided to self-publish on Indiegogo instead, successfully marketing the comic as a battlefield in the culture wars. Basically, he used this controversy to gin up further support—and characterize himself as an underdog rebel while Waid represented the comics establishment. He even accused Waid of threatening Antarctic Press and shared a post alleging that Waid got Marvel Editor-in-Chief C.B. Cebulski to put further pressure on the publisher. There's no evidence that either of these things happened, and Antarctic denied both in a now-deleted tweet:

"FACTS: Mark Waid put a call in to our office. Staff took a message and told ME Waid our publisher would be informed. Nobody at AP

contacted @CBCebulski or @Marvel nor felt threatened in any way by Mr. Waid's call. We have not been bullied into a decision by any comics pro."

Meyer's lawsuit frames Waid as his nemesis, saying that he personally defamed Meyer's character and irreparably damaged his career. It describes Antarctic Press as "frightened for its very survival by Waid's threats," with Waid as the sole reason *Jawbreakers* got cancelled – ignoring the widespread public outcry from numerous other creators and comic stores. Meyer also says that Waid falsely accused him of sharing a list of comic store owners (i.e. doxing them), and defamed Meyer by characterizing him as "racist, serial harasser of minorities, and as affiliated with white supremacists." He demands a jury trial and \$75,000 in damages.

In response, Mark Waid enlisted so-called "Superlawyer" Mark Zaid, best known for his work with political whistleblowers and for suing Libya for \$2.7 billion over the Pan Am 103 bombing. In a statement to the comics blog *Bleeding Cool*, Zaid wrote:

"Mark will aggressively fight this frivolous lawsuit with every legal means available but at the end of the day what will have the greatest favorable impact for him are the actual facts. Mr Meyer's' lawsuit will further reveal to the world his true nature. Ironically his own litigation will likely increase the professional isolation he alleges Mark has caused."

Waid's choice of legal representation is a reminder of how mismatched this alleged rivalry actually is. Meyer's influence looms large in the comics community, but that's because he intentionally courts controversy to promote his work. Picking fights with Mark Waid gives the impression that they're somehow on equal footing, but legal action is a different ballgame from Twitter flamewars. Waid has the means to hire a good lawyer and, most likely, crush Meyer's lawsuit like a bug.

H/T to *Bleeding Cool*

CLOSE



Gavia Baker-Whitelaw



Gavia Baker-Whitelaw is a staff writer at the Daily Dot, covering geek culture and fandom. Specializing in sci-fi movies and superheroes, she also appears as a film and TV critic on BBC radio. Elsewhere, she co-hosts the pop culture podcast Overinvested.

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EXHIBIT 11

Antarctic Press Cancels Jawbreakers in Wake of Controversy, Retailer Boycott

by **Justin Carter** – on May 13, 2018 in **Comics**



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26



This past Friday, Antarctic Press announced it would be publishing *Jawbreakers--Lost Souls*, a comic book written by Richard C. Meyer and drawn by Jon Malin and Brett R. Smith. Crowdfunded through Meyer's fanbase, the comic has currently raised \$248,906 on IndieGogo. Following Antarctic's announcement, several comic book shops announced they would not sell *Jawbreakers* due to Meyer's involvement in what is widely viewed as a harassment campaign against diversity in comics.

In the wake of the announcements, several retailers said they found themselves the victims of harassment, prompting Antarctic to announce late Saturday evening that it would, in fact, not publish *Jawbreakers*. Though the company stated it is a "staunch believer in Creator's Rights," the retailer boycott and subsequent harassment campaign caused it to reverse its decision, leaving the book without a publisher.

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Later that evening, Antarctic tweeted a statement in response to the rumor that Marvel Comics writer Mark Waid had "threatened" the publisher in order to coerce it to cancel the book. According to Antarctic, while Waid did indeed contact the company, he simply left a message, and **no one at the publisher felt bullied into scrapping *Jawbreakers*. Rather, this was a decision made of its own volition.**

Currently, *Jawbreakers* has no publisher, and Meyer says he plans to file a complaint with the Fair Trade Commission.

ADVERTISING

EXHIBIT 12



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16

33

213

